

PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION SHEET

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces are important components of routine infection control in healthcare facilities. Although environmental surfaces (e.g., floors, table tops) are generally not involved in transmission of microorganisms, some surfaces, especially those that are touched frequently (e.g., bed rails, door knobs, lavatory surfaces), may serve as reservoirs of microbial contamination. When these surfaces are touched, the microbial agents can be transferred to the nose, mouth, eyes, or other environmental surfaces.

This fact sheet contains general cleaning and disinfecting guidelines. Specific guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting provider offices, in-patient settings, and emergency medical services are outlined in the *SARS Surveillance and Response Plan for Massachusetts*, available at www.state.ma.us/dph. Additional information regarding cleaning and disinfecting is available on the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars.

General cleaning and disinfecting guidelines include the following:

- o Any EPA-registered hospital detergent-disinfectant currently used by healthcare facilities for environmental sanitation may be used. Manufacturer recommendations for concentration, contact time, and care in handling should be followed.
- o Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as outlined in the "General Infection Control Measures" fact sheet, available at www.state.ma.us/dph, should be worn when cleaning surfaces or equipment currently or previously occupied by or used for a person who is ill.
- o Patient care areas should be kept free of unnecessary items and equipment to limit contamination.
- o On a daily basis, horizontal surfaces (bed tables), surfaces frequently touched by patients and staff (bed rails, doorknobs), and lavatory facilities should be cleaned and disinfected.
- o Once a patient has been discharged from a room, the door should be closed for one hour prior to cleaning and disinfecting.
- o Once a patient has been discharged from a room or area, in addition to the daily cleaning procedures listed, soiled vertical surfaces, durable patient equipment, and curtain dividers should be cleaned and disinfected.
- o Walls and drapes do not need to be disinfected unless obviously soiled.
- o Patient care equipment should be disinfected according to established CDC and manufacturer guidelines.
- o Used cleaning solutions should be discarded and housekeeping equipment should be rinsed and allowed to dry prior to reuse.
- o Trash saturated with blood or body fluids should be disposed of in an appropriate biohazard container and treated accordingly; items not saturated may be discarded as routine medical waste.
- o Soiled linen should be handled as little as possible and with minimum agitation to prevent gross microbial contamination of the air and of persons handling the linen. All soiled linen should be bagged or put into carts at the location where it was used; it should not be sorted or pre-rinsed in patient care areas. Linen soiled with blood or body fluids should be deposited and transported in bags that prevent leakage.

